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AUTHOR Woolfolk, Mansfield
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ABSTRACT

An evaluation of the Detroit Board of Education's 4-session 2-week Outdoor Education and School Camping Program for the summer of 1971, this report examines the 2 camps that served approximately 1400 campers from public schools. Children were assigned 10 to a cabin, and each child was guided and counseled by a cabin counselor. The camp program included hikes, catching and caging small animals, educational displays of natural history, fishing, cookouts, crafts, talent shows, social games, and dancing. Specific program objectives were to improve self-concepts, develop socialization, enhance cultural growth, improve camping skills, and improve recreational skills and safety practices by providing learning experiences in a natural setting. Self-concept was measured by a 9-item questionnaire administered to a random sample of 124 campers on a pre- and post-basis. Essentially no change in self-concept was noted. Results of a camper-experience questionnaire revealed that 64% of the campers enjoyed the experience, 73% would like 4 weeks at camp, 91.9% enjoyed the food, and 44% experienced difficulty adjusting to the eating schedule. Over 90% gained in group responsibility, dining-hall etiquette, and personal hygiene. Cabin counselors reported, through a rating form, that program objectives were met. Questionnaire responses were returned by 72 staff members showing their feelings regarding the entire program. Specific objectives were deemed met, and program continuation was recommended. Included are 8 tables showing measuring instruments and results. (MJB)

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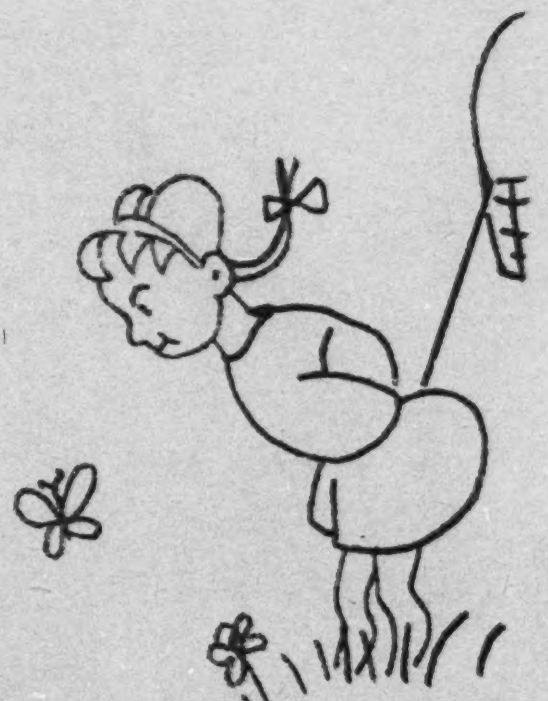
EVALUATION of the OUTDOOR EDUCATION and SCHOOL CAMPING PROGRAM SUMMER 1971



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by Mansfield Woolfolk
Project Evaluator (Title I)

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November, 1971

The data supporting the findings of the evaluation
are on file and available for examination
in the office of the evaluator

Evaluation of the Outdoor Education and School Camping Program

Summer 1971

Background

The Detroit Board of Education has acquired two camp sites, one through purchase with 1966 ESEA, Title I, funds and the other through a leasing arrangement. One camp, known as the Dr. Burt Shurly, is located on North Lake near Chelsea and has a capacity for 230 campers. The other camp located on Grass Lake near Jackson is leased from the Detroit Urban League and has a capacity for 120 campers. Both camps are within twenty miles of each other.

During the eight weeks the camps were in operation during the summer, they accommodated approximately 1400 campers. Approximately ten children of the same age were assigned to a cabin under a cabin counselor. The group served as a unit for the development of camaraderie, for the improvement of social growth and skills, and for the improvement of personal hygiene. Each camper was guided and counseled by the cabin counselor.

The camp program consisted of nature study which included hikes, catching and caging small animals, and educational displays of natural history. The waterfront program included swimming, boating, and water safety. The campers participated in other recreational activities such as cookouts, fishing, crafts, talent shows, social games and dancing.

Objectives

The basic objective of this project is to provide experiences in a natural setting in outdoor education, recreational skills, and communal living. Camp living with a large variety of indoor and outdoor group activities is designed to lead to improved skills in human relationships. The specific objectives are:

1. To improve self concepts of the campers with regard to their relationships with teachers and peers and to school in general.

2. To develop the socialization of the youths through supervised participation in group responsibility, dining hall, and personal hygiene practices.

3. To enhance their cultural growth through participation in activities regarding the humanities and the study of natural environmental factors.

4. To improve their skills in the basic camping disciplines.

5. To improve their outdoor recreational skills and safety practices.

Evaluation Procedures

The plan for the evaluation of the project was intended to measure the effectiveness of the program in terms of the objectives. It encompassed three basic phases:

1. The self concepts of the project participants related to relationships with teachers and peers and to school in general were obtained through a pre- and post administration of a self concept scale to a random group of campers during the second and fourth two-week camping sessions.

2. An appraisal by the participants of their camping experiences was conducted at the conclusion of these sessions.

3. An evaluation of each camper relative to progress made toward the attainment of the project goals was made by the cabin counselors.

Self Concept

It was decided to use a pupil self concept questionnaire at the beginning and at the conclusion of two of the camping periods in an effort to learn whether changes in pupil attitudes toward their relationships with teachers and peers and toward school had occurred during their stay in camp.

A total of one hundred twenty-four campers were selected at random for this purpose from the second and fourth sessions. The self concept scale, containing

nine questions, was administered to these youngsters shortly after their arrival and just prior to their departure from camp. The results are given in Table I.

Although there were some changes in the pretest and posttest data on some of the items, they did not vary too much. In Table I, items 2 and 3, the camper felt he was capable of doing the type of work he thought his teacher expected of him. Pre- and posttest responses by the campers on items 7 and 8 indicate little change in self concept toward their relationships with teachers and peers. Except for item 9 which shows a slight improvement in attitude toward last year's schoolwork, responses to the balance of the items reveal essentially no change in attitude toward school in general.

Table I

Campers' Responses to the Self Concept Scale

Item	Pretest f	Pretest Pct.	Posttest f	Posttest Pct.
1. I think my schoolwork is...				
better than most of my classmates	30	24.1	35	28.2
about the same as the others	87	70.1	82	66.1
worse than most	7	05.6	7	05.6
2. My teacher thinks I am able to do...				
mostly A and B classwork	87	70.1	81	65.3
mostly C classwork	29	23.3	36	29.0
mostly D and E classwork	8	06.4	7	05.6
3. I think I am able to do...				
mostly A and B classwork	91	73.3	82	66.1
mostly C classwork	29	23.3	36	29.0
mostly D classwork	4	03.2	6	04.8
4. How much schooling do you think you will complete?				
junior high or less	14	11.2	19	15.2
senior high school	25	20.1	15	12.0
four years of college	85	68.5	90	72.5
5. Do you think you have the ability to complete...				
junior high or less	19	15.3	20	16.0
senior high school	25	20.1	24	19.3
college education	80	64.5	80	64.5
6. How much help do you think education will be on your getting a job after you leave school?				
no help	15	12.0	17	13.7
some help	36	29.0	35	28.2
very much help	73	58.8	72	58.0

Table I (Cont'd)

Item	Pretest f	Pretest Pct.	Posttest f	Posttest Pct.
7. During the past school year most of the kids in my classes...				
liked me very much	86	69.3	94	75.8
liked me a little	29	23.3	21	16.9
did not like me at all	9	07.2	9	07.2
8. During the past school year I felt most of my teachers...				
liked me very much	89	71.7	89	71.7
liked me a little	26	20.9	27	21.7
did not like me at all	9	07.2	8	06.4
9. During the past school year I was...				
not pleased with my schoolwork	19	14.5	12	09.6
somewhat pleased with my schoolwork	39	31.4	32	25.8
very pleased with my schoolwork	66	53.2	80	64.5

Camper Questionnaire

Following the self concept phase, an effort was made to obtain evaluatory information from the campers at the conclusion of their two-week program in regard to their camping experience. A camper questionnaire was used for this purpose.

The data in Table II indicate that for one hundred twenty-four campers,[1] 50 percent were having their initial experience in remaining overnight at a camp. Eighty percent enjoyed living with those their own age and 64 percent enjoyed being at camp for the two-week session, but 73 percent thought they would like to spend four weeks at camp. Eighty-three percent wanted to return to camp if given the opportunity. It is noteworthy that 91.9 percent enjoyed

[1]The campers who responded to the self concept scale also completed the camper questionnaire.

the food at camp and 44 percent had difficulty adjusting to the eating schedule. It seems apparent that the 50 percent of experienced campers had an influence on both of these figures.

Another part of the questionnaire was concerned with progress made in the socialization of campers in the areas of group responsibility, dining hall etiquette and personal hygiene. In this group of questions the campers evaluated themselves on the various behaviors according to a four-point scale; namely, much improved, improved, no improvement, or worse. As indicated by the data in Table III, the majority of the campers felt they were in the much improved category in all areas. Significant gains (much improved plus improved ratings) were made in dining hall etiquette which included (1) waiting for food to be passed, 92.6 percent, and (2) saying please and thank you, 91.9 percent. Gains were also made in group responsibility and personal hygiene practices; (1) cabin cleanup, 90.2 percent, (2) setting tables, 91.0 percent, and (3) health habits, 93.4 percent. Other large improvements were indicated in attitude toward adults and peers; (1) respect for your counselor, 92.7 percent, (2) respect for other adults at camp, 91.8 percent, and (3) respect for your friends, 90.3 percent.

Table IV deals with activities the campers were engaged in at camp. The data show that all camp activities were liked by the majority of the campers. Even the activity with the lowest rank, archery, was liked by 72 percent of the campers.

Table II

Responses of Campers to Questions on the Camper Questionnaire

Question	Response: Yes f	Yes Pct.	No f	No Pct.
Is this your first overnight camping experience?	62	50.0	62	50.0
Was your stay at camp long enough?	79	64.0	45	36.0
Did you enjoy living with others your own age?	109	88.0	15	12.0
Would you like to spend four weeks at camp instead of two weeks?	91	73.0	33	27.0
Did you enjoy the food at camp?	114	91.9	10	08.0
Did you have difficulty adjusting to the eating schedule?	54	44.0	70	56.0
Did you have any fears about camp such as being away from home, animals or darkness?	84	67.7	40	32.2
By the end of the camping session did you overcome any of these fears?	64	51.6	60	48.3
Did you make many new friends at camp?	119	96.0	5	04.0
Did you like your cabin counselor?	115	93.0	9	07.0
If you had the opportunity to attend camp again, would ycu do so?	103	83.0	21	16.9

Table III

Campers' Self Evaluations On Camp Behaviors

Activity	Perceived Change: Much Improved f	Much Improved Pct.	Improved f	Improved Pct.	No Improvement f	No Improvement Pct.	Worse f	Worse Pct.
Cabin cleanup	70	56.4	42	33.8	8	06.4	4	03.2
Setting Tables	68	54.8	45	36.2	8	06.4	3	02.4
Using table utensils	70	56.4	40	32.2	12	09.6	2	01.6
Waiting for food to be passed	86	69.3	29	23.3	7	05.6	2	01.6
Passing food when asked	75	60.4	38	30.6	10	08.0	1	00.8
Saying please and thank you	78	62.9	35	28.2	5	04.0	6	04.8
Dining room behavior	70	56.4	38	30.6	12	09.6	4	03.2
Health habits	77	62.0	39	31.4	7	05.6	4	03.2
Respect for your counselor	79	63.7	36	29.0	9	07.2	0	00.0
Respect for other adults at camp	84	67.7	30	24.1	9	07.2	1	00.8
Respect for your friends	64	51.6	48	38.7	8	06.4	4	03.2

Table IV

Responses of Campers to Camp Activities

Activity	Response: Like f	Like Pct.	Dislike f	Dislike Pct.
Movies	108	87	16	13
Talent Shows	106	85	18	15
Hikes	108	87	16	13
Meals	116	94	8	06
Boating	113	91	11	09
Group Singing	102	82	22	18
Archery	89	72	35	28
Fishing	115	93	9	07
Nature Study	96	77	28	23
Swimming	116	94	8	06
Basketball	101	81	23	19
Softball	116	94	8	06
Dancing	107	86	17	14
Cookout	112	90	12	10
Camp Living	115	93	9	07
Rest Hour	92	74	32	26

Cabin Counselor's Ratings of Campers

The cabin counselors were staff members who by nature of their proximity and almost constant association with the campers were considered to be the most knowledgeable about the youngsters and their progress pertinent to the objectives of the program.

Each cabin counselor filled out a rating form on each camper in his cabin. The counselor maintained living quarters in the cabin with the campers and directed and accompanied them on all camping activities. Table V lists all the items on the rating form. For each item the cabin counselor responses are recorded and converted into percentages.

The data on the cabin counselor rating form shows that the objectives of the program were being met according to the results of the counselor rating form. The responses show that 95.9 met the dining hall requirements, 97.4 abided by the camp rules, and 91.7 performed in the cabin cleaning duties. In addition, the percentages were high among those who met the requirements in the study of natural environment and in improvement in safety and recreational practices.

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Table V

Cabin Counselor Responses
Camper Rating Form

Item	Response: Yes f	Yes Pct.	No f	No Pct.
Did the camper perform his tasks willingly?	504	92.9	38	07.0
Did the camper volunteer to help whenever his services were needed?	472	87.7	66	12.2
Did the camper meet dining requirements?	516	95.9	22	04.0
At the beginning of camp did the camper need to improve in table manners?	189	35.5	342	64.4
If improvement were needed, did the camper improve?	358	96.4	13	03.5
Did the camper learn the required number of songs?	502	96.7	17	03.2
Did the camper take active part in group or choral singing?	502	93.8	33	06.1
Did the camper meet the letter writing requirements?	531	98.1	10	01.8
Did the camper produce any objects in arts and crafts?	515	95.1	26	04.8
Did the camper spend any time reading books, magazines or newspapers?	367	70.3	155	29.6
Did the camper develop any skills in the various games?	454	86.9	68	13.0
Did the camper observe rules of the camp?	529	97.4	14	02.5
Did the camper meet requirement of bed making?	538	99.0	5	00.9

Table V (Cont'd)

Item	Response: Yes f	Yes Pct.	No f	No Pct.
Did the camper perform cabin cleanup duties willingly?	492	91.7	44	08.2
Did the cabin win any cabin cleanup awards?	233	52.0	215	47.9
Did the camper meet the requirements in the identification of trees?	337	64.0	189	35.9
Did the camper meet the requirements in the identification of plants?	315	59.8	211	40.1
Did the camper meet the requirements in the identification of wildlife?	357	65.9	184	34.0
Did the camper meet the requirements in the identification of star constellation?	146	26.8	397	73.1
Did the camper win any awards for outstanding achievement?	231	56.6	177	43.3
Do you think the camping experience was beneficial to the camper?	517	97.7	12	02.2
By the end of camp did the camper improve his swimming skills?	252	65.7	131	34.2

Staff Questionnaire

In an attempt to sample the feelings of the camping staff as to how they felt in regards to the entire program for the campers, they were asked to fill out a questionnaire. Questionnaires were completed by seventy-two staff members, a nearly 100% return. Responses were categorized and tabulated.

In Tables VI, VII, and VIII the responses are listed according to their frequency of mention. Group living was one of the benefits the camper gained from his camp experience. Here are some of the typical responses: "They learned the importance of giving and sharing in a group living experience;" "Many campers have learned how to make friends and work as a group;" "Campers learned to respect their peers and the adults at camp;" "Campers learned to be independent by doing for themselves;" "Camp environment was a new experience for this was his first time being away from home;" "Functioning with a group, he gained more self confidence."

In Table VII, parent visits led the list of aspects of the experience that had adverse effects on the camper. Here are some of the typical responses: "Parents upset the camper when they visit;" "Parent visits are unnecessary because of campers' short stay in camp;" "Camping schedules should be more flexible to get away from school routine;" "Fear of darkness and outdoors prevented some campers from enjoying their camping experience;" "Punishment for such things as fighting or talking after lights out made some campers fearful of their counselor."

In Table VIII, dealing with suggestions for improvements, some of the responses were: "Many of the staff were so immature;" "Orientation week was virtually a waste of time the way it was handled;" "A program cannot run smoothly without the proper tools and supplies;" "Camp program is in need of reorganization;" "Staff should not smoke in presence of campers;" "More unity needed among staff;" "The selection method for campers should be updated;" "Meals and menus should not be based on ethnic groups;" "Some of the facilities are unsafe."

Table VI

Benefits That The Campers Received

Benefit	Frequency
Group living	50
Making new friends	40
Increased respect for adults and peers	30
Gain in independence	27
Change of environment	20
Maturation	15

Table VII

Aspects of Camping Experience Having An Adverse Effect on Campers

Adverse Effect	Frequency
Parent visits	50
Camp schedule too much like school	25
Fear of darkness and outdoors	20
Homesickness	15
Punishment	10

Table VIII

Suggestions for Improvement

Suggestion	Frequency
Meaningful orientation for staff	35
Improved facilities	25
More supplies	20
More flexible camp program	20
Better screening and selection of campers	20
More varied meals	20
Better health exams	20
Better camp leadership	15

Summary

The Outdoor Education Camping Project was intended to provide a spectrum of informal learning experiences and personal associations which were believed to have transferability to the school classroom and group living. It was designed to provide disadvantaged school children with the opportunity for personal, social, and cultural growth through a first hand study of nature, experiences in communal living and participation in organized recreational activities through a two-week stay at a camp. Approximately 1400 youngsters were able to participate in this natural environmental setting during the four two-week camping sessions at Green Pastures and Burt Shurly Camps located approximately eighty miles from Detroit.

This evaluation is based on data as it relates to the objectives of the program. The assessment of the camping program in providing informal learning experiences in a camp setting which have transferability to the classroom and group living can at best be made on a long range basis. Within the imposed limitations of available data the potential attainment of this objective is promising. Although the camper's self concept showed little change from the pre- to the post measure, other data did indicate improved relationships with adult staff and peers. Their counselor's assessment of progress made by the campers in the socialization aspects indicate that the specific objective related to this area had been achieved. Information related to the campers' participation in activities concerning cultural growth and natural environmental factors indicated the attainment of the third objective. Considerable progress was made by the campers in the swimming aspect of the program which indicated the objective of this phase of the program had been achieved. It is the view of the evaluator that the program has met the specific objectives that were established and that the program should remain in operation.